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STATE FOR SCA/FO (DAS GASTRIGHT), SCA/A, S/CRS, SCA/PB,  
S/CT, EUR/RPM, PRM/ANE, INL  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/A-AA/ANE MWARD, AID/CDHA/DG  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN  
OSD FOR BREZINSKI  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD  
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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT/QALAT: RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

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¶1. (U) Summary: In the challenging operating environment of southern Afghanistan, Qalat is an example of a city that has been able to make progress on the long road to reconstruction. This progress is a function primarily of the relatively stable security environment and a collaborative working relationship between the provincial government, the U.S.-led PRT, and local community. A number of high-profile projects have recently been completed or will soon begin, thus helping to maintain the positive momentum of reconstruction. The addition of the UNAMA office will hopefully lead to more UN Agencies and international organizations in Qalat. End Summary.

Qalat - A Provincial Capital on the Rise and the Challenges to Long-term Success

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¶2. (U) Qalat is the provincial capital of Zabul, an exceptionally poor and rural province in southern Afghanistan. Overall, there has been limited donor investment in Zabul. The province's population is 250,000; the capital's is 29,000. The largest and most significant project to date was the building of the national ring road, which bisects the province and serves as a transit point between Kandahar and Kabul. The ring road is the only paved road in the province. Donor funding has increased in the last year, with a significant amount of the effort being concentrated in Qalat.

¶3. (SBU) Zabul serves as a conduit for anti-government

elements between the southern provinces of Kandahar and Uruzgan and the volatile eastern part of the country. Stability in Zabul is an essential element to maintain overall security for this region. Qalat's development will spur reconstruction in the rest of the province's districts, which are isolated and receive limited services.

¶4. (U) Reconstruction and development efforts are being funded by multiple sources including the Government of Afghanistan (Afghanistan Stabilization Program, National Solidarity Program), private Afghans, CERP, USAID, UN agencies, and third country donors (e.g. UAE). There is currently a significant amount of construction underway in 'New Qalat City' - an area to which government offices and merchants will soon relocate, and that will become the new city center. New Qalat City is home to the governor's new offices, the provincial hospital, the Department of Women's Affairs, the revenue center, and new Afghan shops. Plans are underway for further development and expansion of this area including a conference center, fire station, courthouse, and a branch of Da Afghanistan Bank. The first and only airfield in Zabul, funded by USAID, opened in mid-September.

¶5. (U) There are limited economic opportunities in Zabul, and agriculture remains the centerpiece of the economy. Support is needed to increase agriculture productivity, expertise, and technology. A recent visit by USAID/Afghanistan officers in September underscored the importance of the development of agriculture to increase incomes and reach out to the people of Zabul.

¶6. (U) Vocational training is a critical development focus for Qalat. With funding from the PRT, the Qalat Trade School began in November 2005 in partnership with the Zabul

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provincial government. The trade school offers courses in technical subjects such as carpentry, welding, plumbing, auto mechanics, agriculture, nursing, EMT, computers, rug weaving, and electronics. This trade school has been viewed as widely successful. The U.S.-led PRT and USAID are exploring ways to build upon the trade school's success and transition the program to a local entity.

¶7. (U) A USAID-funded electrification project will provide high-visibility for Qalat. This project will provide approximately 4,300 connections for Qalat city and additional generation capacity. It will also generate numerous jobs and new technical skills. Efforts must be made to think beyond the infrastructure, and consider how to best make the new system economically sustainable.

¶8. (U) The PRT will soon start construction of a road to connect Qalat to the northern Mizan and Argandab districts, thereby increasing transport, security, and communication. In addition, USAID is set to begin construction of a road in the southern districts of Shinkay, Shamulzai and Atghar.

¶9. (U) Construction of roads and key infrastructure feature prominently in Qalat's development. To date, however, construction planning has been done in an ad-hoc fashion, especially in New Qalat city, and does not systematically address the set of interrelated issues related to new development and construction (e.g. water supply, roads, drainage, power etc). Immediate technical assistance is needed to improve city planning and implementation.

¶10. (U) The new UNAMA office in Qalat is a welcome arrival. UNAMA is playing an important coordination role among the reconstruction and development actors, and is also helping to liaise with the key UN agencies working in Zabul such as WFP, WHO, UNDP, and UNICEF. With UNAMA's assistance, the hope is that more international organizations and UN agencies will increase their programs in the province.

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Coordination and Cooperation ? An Essential Element to  
Success  
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¶11. (SBU) Much of the success in Zabul, and specifically Qalat, can be attributed to the strong partnership that exists between the provincial leadership, the PRT, and the local community. The PRT Command group includes U.S. military, State Department, USAID, and USDA representatives. Governor Del Bar Jan Arman has consistently presented a vision for Qalat's reconstruction and development. However, the weak capacity of the line ministry directors has presented challenges to implementing this vision.

¶12. (U) With the recent establishment of the Provincial Development Council (PDC), there is hope that the capacity of the line ministry directors will improve. In addition, UNDP's National Area-Based Development Program recently completed workshops for the District Development Assemblies (DDA) and the first phase of PDC training in Qalat; a process that will help to strengthen development planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and decision-making at the provincial level.

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Comments  
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¶13. (U) This cable is first in a series that will outline reconstruction and development efforts at the provincial level in which PRTs are playing key roles.

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